



Kansas State Department of Education

120 S.E. 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1182

February 21, 2000

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Attention: Danny Werfel, Desk Officer
Department of Education
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W., Room 10235
New Executive Office Building
Washington DC 20503

Dear Mr. Werfel:

The purpose of this letter is to comment on the latest revisions made to the proposed reporting method for Title II of the Higher Education Act.

The following comments are the result of a meeting between the staff of the Kansas State Department of Education and representatives from the teacher education units in Kansas at which implications of the Title II legislation were discussed.

The efforts of the Department of Education to incorporate many of the changes suggested by members of the education community are very much appreciated. We believe that the second draft of the reporting method is clearer and more concise in comparison to the original draft. Still, we have concerns over four aspects of the reporting method that we hope you will consider.

First, the reporting method calls for states to rank institutions alphabetically within quartiles according to pass rates. In this system, it is possible for an institution to have a pass rate of over 90% and still be listed in the bottom quartile. Thus, a ranking in the lowest quartile can clearly distort public perception of what otherwise would be considered a strong pass rate. This problem is even more prevalent when taking into consideration that many institutions require students to pass all assessments for state certification before program completion, thus resulting in a 100% pass rate. Institutions without such a requirement will typically be pushed to the lower quartiles solely because of differing program completion requirements.

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Another potential pitfall of using quartile rankings arises when there is little or no variance among pass rates. For example, if each institution within a state has a 100% pass rate, there will be no logical way to rank institutions in quartiles. Furthermore, it is likely that the quartile ranking will overshadow other evidence of program quality, even when there is little variance between institutional pass rates.

Second, the summary pass rate may be misleading if it is used to represent the overall quality of a program. For example, as the chart on page 13 illustrates, students can pass the majority of assessments (36 out of 40 for 8 students), yet the summary pass rate is 50%. The single-assessment and aggregate pass rates more justly represent the number of assessments passed by program completers.

Third, institutions are required to report their Title II results to the public through publications such as school catalogs and other promotional material. Many institutions prepare their catalogs and other literature a minimum of two years in advance and circulate this information for a minimum of two years. Including recent Title II information in these publications will require more frequent updates of program materials which, in turn, will result in increased expenses to the institution.

Also related to expenses is the method by which pass rates will be calculated. There is much concern over the fee associated with having the testing companies calculate the pass rates for institutions and states. There has been no indication regarding who and how much will be charged for such services.

Fourth, because pass rates are only one indication of program quality, institutions are encouraged to provide supplemental information that further describes their teacher preparation programs. The reporting method does not indicate how such supplemental information will be included in the final report to Congress and to the public. If institutions provide the supplemental information, they would like to know that it will be made available in a format that is equally prevalent to the pass rates.

Thank you for considering the above concerns as you move toward finalizing the Title II reporting method.

Sincerely,

Ken Bungert, Director

The University of Kansas

School of Education
Office of the Dean

23 February 2000

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Attention: Danny Werfel
Desk Officer, Department of Education
Office of Management and the Budget
725 – 17th Street N.W.
Room 10235
New Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Werfel:

The purpose of this letter is to comment on behalf of the School of Education at the University of Kansas regarding the January 2000 draft guidelines proposing reporting methods for Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1998. The efforts of the Department of Education to incorporate many of the changes suggested by members of the education community are very much appreciated. We believe that this second draft of the reporting method is clearer and more concise in comparison to the original draft. Nonetheless, we have concerns over four aspects of the reporting method that we hope you will consider as the final regulations are developed.

First, the reporting method calls for states to rank institutions alphabetically within quartiles according to pass rates. When statistical data are normatively ranked, e.g. deciles, quartiles, etc., it is possible, and perhaps likely, that little or no variance will emerge among pass rates. It then becomes possible for an institution to have a laudatory pass rate (e.g. over 90%) yet be placed in the bottom quartile. Moreover, it is also the case that if pass rates in a given state are alarmingly low, a few of the state's institutions will be placed in the top quartile despite questionable pass rates.

The intent of Title II of the Act is to provide the public with an annual record of institutional rankings on the basis of their respective pass rates. Normative treatment of these rankings can clearly distort public perceptions. While some states require their institutions to include the passing of licensure tests as one of their program completion requirements, many states allow institutions the choice of whether or not to include this as a requirement. In Kansas, the problem of normative rankings is exacerbated when some of the state's institutions require students to pass all licensure assessments before program completion,

thus resulting in a 100% pass rate, and others do not. An institution without such a requirement will fall in the lower quartiles because it requires its students to complete the program prior to assessments of pedagogical knowledge or teaching performance. Ironically, in an effort to demonstrate the merits of its program, such an institution would find itself penalized by the method of normative rank comparisons.

For these reasons, we believe that quartiles or any other method of normatively ranking institutions obfuscates the clarity of the public domain information required by Title II. Thus, we recommend that strong consideration be given to a simple, absolute rank ordering of each institution in the state on the basis of its pass rate.

Secondly, institutions are required to report their Title II results to the public through publications such as school catalogs and other promotional materials. Many institutions prepare their catalogs and other literature a minimum of two years in advance and circulate this information for a minimum of two years. Including recent Title II information in these publications will require more frequent updates of program materials which, in turn, will result in increased expenses to the institution.

Nearly all institutions of higher education operate web sites that can be updated quickly and accurately. However, not all schools and other agencies that employ personnel required by the Act to receive institutional report cards have access to the internet. Therefore, we recommend that consideration be given to allow institutions to use their web sites as the primary mode of communicating annual pass rates, supplemental information, and other reporting requirements of the Act, and to print copies of this information from their web sites for distribution to school counselors, prospective employers, etc. Less frequently updated materials such as catalogs would be required to contain Title II reports, but would not be required to be updated any more frequently than the rate stipulated by that institution's policy.

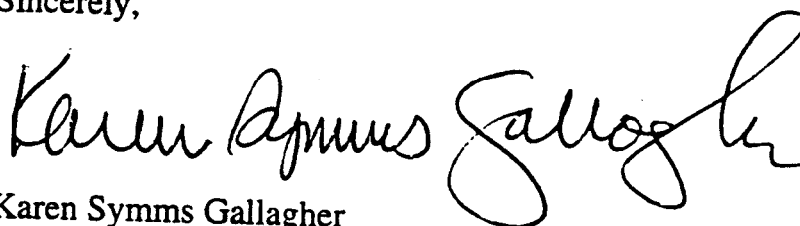
Third, we are concerned about the specific fees associated with the calculation of pass rates for institutions and states. There has been no indication regarding the procedures for billing institutions, states, or both in cost-sharing fashion, nor has there been an indication as to cost estimates for such services. We recommend that the guidelines provide clarification of these matters.

Finally, because pass rates are only one indication of program quality, institutions are encouraged to provide supplemental information that further describes their teacher preparation programs. The reporting method does not indicate how such supplemental information will be included in the final report to Congress and to the public. If institutions provide the supplemental information, we would ask for assurance that it will be made available in a format of equal salience to the format employed for pass rates.

Mr. Danny Werfel
February 23, 2000
Page 3

Thank you for considering the above concerns as you move toward finalizing the Title II reporting method.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Karen Symms Gallagher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" and last name "Gallagher" being more prominent than the middle name "Symms".

Karen Symms Gallagher
Dean

Copies:

Robert Hemenway, Chancellor
David Shulenburg, Provost
University of Kansas

and

Kenneth Bungert, Director
Certification and Teacher Education
Kansas State Department of Education

Martha: Just in case Andy didn't pass this along to you!! -Jon

>Date: Fri, 11 Feb 2000 13:49:05 -0600
>From: Andy Tompkins <atompkins@ksbe.state.ks.us>
>Subject: Re: Please Pass Along
>To: engelhar@WSUHUB.UC.TWSU.EDU
>
>Jon,
>
>Martha's e-mail address is mgage@ksbe.state.ks.us Hope all is well with you.
>
>Andy
>
>>>> Jon Engelhardt <engelhar@WSUHUB.UC.TWSU.EDU> 02/11/00 10:43AM >>>>
>Andy: I don't seem to have Martha Gage's e-mail address and wanted
>to pass along to her some draft communications that we are working on
>her i response to the Title II Report Card for teacher ed (federal)
>and Kansas HB 2798. Could you please do this? Plead feel free to
>read yourself if you are interested!!
>
> -Jon
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>Martha: Below are tow communications I have written. The first is a
>note I wrote by e-mail to our chief budget person who is attempting
>to formulate a financial impact statement for HB 2798. As she and I
>agreed by phone, I would give her more info on the ill-conceived
>nature of the bill to weave into her response. After my conversation
>with Marcus to find out there was a discussion on this in Topeka on
>Wednesday, I thought I'd pass this along to you in case there is a
>new idea or two to help or some wording that you might pick up. The
>second item is a ghost-written letter that I put together for
>WSU President to comment on the latest Guide draft for the Title II
>Report Card. Again you may find some useful info yourself. I would
>very much appreciate no credited quoting of this one, since I do not
>know what the President will actually use from my suggested letter!!
>Hope all this helps!

>
>PS Really enjoyed the meeting yesterday in Topeka and the dinner
>last night!! It was nice to see all the wonderful Kansas teachers
>gathered!! You all do a wonderful job recognizing people. And I was
>most flattered at all the attention given to a Dean who dropped by
>for a day to learn and celebrate like everyone else. Thank you for
>being so thoughtful!! (Pass this along to Bob Gast) -Jon
>-----

>HB2798
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>

>Mary: Per our discussion, there are 3 separate provisions for HB
>2798, the first two having implications/ costs for us.(the third call
>for the KBOE to monitor compliance).

>

>First, the bill calls for a universal "teacher warrantee" program for
>all universities with state approved teacher education programs. In
>this warrantee, any district identifying a teacher that it deems as
>"performing poorly" and who earned a degree is in the previous 5
>years must be provided remediation (pedagogy and subject matter) by
>the preparing institution. This does not provide, for example, that
>the teacher be appropriately placed in a teaching situation for
>which the individual was prepared--e.g., elementary prepared teacher
>teaching 8th grade mathematics or secondary science teacher teaching
>English) nor does it call for any independent verification that the
>district determination is correct. The university could be "used" as
>a foil to keep off teacher unions in a termination case and to
>prepare a teacher in an areas for which the district has need and the
>teacher was not formally prepared--all at University expense.
>University costs could range form a simple phone call and a few
>minutes time with a teacher to lodging expenses for the teacher to
>live in Wichita (from another area) and free tuition for classes in
>pedagogy or subject matter--even up to a complete added major in an
>extreme case--since there is no limit to the remediation the
>university could be required to provide. Even if the university is
>included in some verification of the need for remediation, there
>would be expense in making that determination. (And no doubt some
>appeal process would need to be put in place, also costing time and
>expense.) Realistically, in other places where this has been in
>place (ESU has such a warrantee program) districts rarely use
>this--so it raises some real questions as to whether it is a
>realistic way to address teacher competence accountability. My guess
>is that if it were put in place the way it currently is worded that
>we would be doing a lot of paying of other higher ed institutions who
>were close to the teacher to work with them to "remediate" without
>any verification as to what is actually needed, if anything.

>

>Second, the bill calls for the percentage of "graduates" who pass
>state examinations (I'm a little unclear which tests are required by
>72-1394) and the rate of placing such graduates in teaching
>positions. (a) There is ambiguity about what to do if there are more
>than one test (e.g., number of tests passed or number of grads who
>pass all tests--and this can make a great deal of difference in how
>the statistics are interpreted)--100% of our students pass the PPST
>because we use it as an entrance requirement (so is it meaningful?),
>but more significantly this involves students rights to privacy.
>Students would have to be willing to release test scores to the
>university or state. What if a student didn't want to take the test
>(i.e., doesn't want to pursue certification in Kansas), does this
>mean that the university is penalized because that student is not
>counted as a "pass"? I suppose the University could require the

>test(s) to graduate (which amounts to a student fee) or pay for all
 >students to take the tests (could be a considerable expense). The
 >state is changing certification testing requirements right now and
 >one of the "tests" is a performance test demonstrating competence to
 >obtain a standard (as opposed to temporary) certificate; that is
 >several years out (up to 3) after graduation; is failure to pass that
 >"test" the responsibility of the preparing institution? (And there
 >are many intervening variables on the job much more powerful than
 >the initial preparation impacting performance). So some definition
 >of the time horizon of what is included as relevant tests is needed,
 >as well as a logical tie to the preparation itself (and not other
 >factors like appropriateness of assignment to training--see arguments
 >listed above relative to this). The issue also begs definition as to
 >what a "graduate" is; is this only degree completers? What about
 >post-degree certification students (who have degrees from other
 >colleges)? And what about transfer students--how much does a
 >students have to take from WSU to be considered a WSU student
 >(definitional issue)? Who reports them as a student--is it
 >self-report and if so, how is that verified (e.g, a post bac student
 >does poorly at WSU and transfers to Friends for the last 15 semester
 >hours--does the student report WSU or Friends, and who verifies that
 >the student does this correctly--or do the two universities share the
 >credit/blame, even if we terminated the student in our program?) If
 >there is to be some verification process, it is likely to involve the
 >testing companies and create costs--who pays them? Similarly, who
 >compiles the institutional statistics once the students are verified
 >by an institution as a program completer? Again that is likely to be
 >testing companies and that will cost somebody. And what about
 >minority students who traditionally do poorly on tests, can society
 >afford to not pursue minority teachers because their lack of testing
 >skills relative to majority students might reflect poorly on their
 >preparation programs, creating inertia to set admission standards
 >that discriminate against poor test takers? Probably the strongest
 >argument opposing this is that much of its intent is already included
 >in Title II of the Higher Ed Reauthorization Act of Congress which
 >requires state to publish a "report card" on its teacher preparation
 >programs and charges states and NCES with putting standard reporting
 >procedures together; lots of activity on this is currently underway!!
 >
 >(b) Data on the rate of placement in teaching positions suggests
 >that a student not placed reflects poorly on that student's
 >preparation. While most of our students do indeed pursue careers in
 >teaching, there are those who either wish to pursue other goals or
 >start families and enter teaching later. Are those failures? At
 >Arizona State some years ago, our second highest rate of employment
 >in teacher education was in high tech--industry looking for
 >personnel with "people skills". Was that a failure of the program?
 >At WSU my own wife was a teacher ed graduate--and is now an advisor
 >in teacher educational, having not taught in the meantime--is she a
 >failure of the program? I think not. More direct to your task is

>the issue of how we find out who actually IS employed as a teacher.
 >Without some significant changes in reporting procedures at the state
 >level, we have no idea if a student is employed or where. And what
 >about students who move out of state? Do we have to hire detective
 >agencies to track down our graduates? As a practical matter one can
 >hardly enforce reporting employment status as graduation requirement.
 >We can prepare individuals for a teaching license (as a successful
 >beginner), but we can hardly force them to take employment!!

>

>

>Hope all this is helpful. As we discussed, you will now take as many
 >of my ideas as you see useful and weave them into a budgetary
 >response to the legislature. I look forward to seeing your next
 >iteration for a response!! Thanks for asking for my help!!

>-Jon

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>REPORT CARD/TITLE II

>

>February 9, 2000

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>

>Danny Werfel, Desk Officer

>Department of Education

>Office of Management and Budget

>725 17th Street, NW

>Room 10235

>New Executive Office Building

>Washington, DC 20503

>

>

>Dear Mr. Werfel:

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>Recently I received information on the latest revision in the
 >Reference and Reporting Guide for implementing provisions contained
 >in Title II of the Higher Education Act on reporting requirements for
 >teacher education programs. The purpose of this communication is to
 >provide comment on this latest version of this guide.

>

>Let me begin by complimenting the Department of Education on its
 >efforts to incorporate many of the suggestions which members of the
 >Education community offered to help make this a more workable
 >document. Good progress was made the areas of overall clarity, data
 >verification, student privacy (FERPA) concerns, the multiplicity of
 >pass rates, overall streamlining of reporting requirements and modest
 >reduction in effort reporting will require of universities.

>

>The above notwithstanding, you invite additional comments, and I will
 >identify several additional areas to you consideration. First, while

>the number of pass-rates was reduced, the proposed format for
 >reporting pass-rates to the public may be misleading,
 >miss-characterizing strong programs. For example, as your chart in
 >page 13 illustrates, students could pass the overwhelming number of
 >tests (36 out of 40 for 8 students) and yet the program could be
 >characterized as having a 50% pass rate. The guide also calls for
 >ranking institutions in each state by quartile according to
 >pass-rates. In this system it is possible (perhaps even reasonable)
 >for an institution to have a pass-rate over 90% and still be listed
 >"in the bottom quartile"-clearly skewing public perception of what
 >otherwise would be considered a strong performance by program
 >completers.

>

>Second, the issue of out-of-state students remains unresolved.
 >According to the Guide these persons would be excluded from being
 >reported. This sets up an incomparable situation between
 >institutions when not all institutions in a given state have roughly
 >an equal proportion of out-of-state students who return to their home
 >states after program completion; this may especially create a
 >negative bias against regional institutions.

>

>Third, the Guide calls for data on students who complete alternative
 >route programs to be reported only in the aggregate and by states.
 >Higher Ed institutions are to remove such persons from their
 >institutional database. Since in most states alternatively prepared
 >teachers largely complete programs in those same higher education
 >institutions, these institutions ought to receive credit for the
 >students it prepares. States could calculate separate pass-rates for
 >alternatives route candidates in a state without removing these
 >students from the institution's database. Just as institutions
 >sometimes have several program variations that lead to certification,
 >those institutions ought not be required to exclude from the
 >institution's data one of those variations called "alternative".

>

>Fourth, the most recent Guide calls for institutions to report data
 >on all program "completers" whether the institutions consider them
 >successful or not (i.e., willing to recommend them for teacher
 >certification). Although rare, it is not unreasonable for students
 >to meet degree requirements and not satisfy the institution's
 >standards for a recommendation for certification. Sometimes these
 >students are ushered off to a side degree program and in other cases
 >they are allowed to finish the program with an agreement the
 >institution will NOT provide a recommendation for certification (or
 >allow them to take certification tests). I suggest you consider some
 >mechanism for institutions to be able to identify those students it
 >considers its "successful" completers, not just graduates.

>

>Fifth, somewhat related to the last point, the guide seems to suggest
 >on page 7 that an institution may be held accountable for a student's
 >performance on future licensing examinations even if that student

>takes only one course from that institution. As only one example,
 >suppose a student transfers from out-of-state with only student
 >teaching and a few subject field course remaining to complete a
 >program, does the institution accept responsibility for that student
 >or simply deny the student access because of the liability
 >implications of accepting him/her. So the issue of "when is a
 >student really an institution's student?" is in need of addressing.

>
 >And finally, Appendix C requires information on the faculty. The
 >nature of the data requested suggests that the teacher education
 >program is the sole or primary domain of the "school, college or
 >department of Education" (SCDE), commonly referred to as the Ed
 >school. At institutions like ours there is dialog about how the
 >teacher education program has wider ownership than the College of
 >Education. There is also dialog around what the proper role of
 >practicing professionals (master teachers)--sometimes referred to as
 >adjuncts because of their part-time nature--ought to be in teacher
 >preparation. It would seem that the important issue is whether
 >"qualified" supervision is being provided. Such assumptions about
 >the nature of the faculty and the locus of teacher education in the
 >institution ought to be examined.

>
 >In closing, let me once again express my appreciation for the work
 >the Department has done thus far in modifying the teacher education
 >reporting requirements for Title II. I urge your serious
 >consideration of the comments in this letter and look forward to
 >seeing the result of the next stage of your work.

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 >
 >Sincerely,

>
 >
 >Donald Beggs, President

>
 >Cc Peter Zoller, VPAA
 > Jon Engelhardt, Dean College of Education

>
 >Dr. Jon M. Engelhardt, Dean
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 >-----
 >Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success.

> When you do a thing, do it with your might. Put your whole
> soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be
> active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you
> will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever
> achieved without enthusiasm.

>
> Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)
> Philosopher, essayist, and poet
> -----

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